



**Office of the Attorney General  
Paul G. Summers**

## **CONSUMER ALERT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ATTORNEY GENERAL WARNS CONSUMERS TO BE AWARE OF MISLEADING PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS**

Attorney General Paul Summers cautions elderly Tennesseans to carefully examine any offer before signing up for one of the new Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Cards becoming available this week.

“Unfortunately, there are people waiting to take advantage of our most vulnerable citizens through deception and fraud,” said Attorney General Summers. “Con artists are likely to attempt to use confusion about the new program to trick people into giving out personal information such as credit card information, bank account numbers or other personal information.”

Some consumers have already received mailings about the program, which becomes effective June 1, that look like an official government letter even though the card was not approved by Medicare. It is legal for companies not associated with the government to sell the discount cards. However, these programs could contain unexpected consequences or even losses for the consumer.

Solicitors may fraudulently offer to enroll seniors in the discount card program in order to sell them something or obtain personal information.

Medicare recipients will receive authentic information from Medicare by mail, not on the phone or door to door. Seniors can find the list of approved drug card sponsors and information about the program at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Attorney General Summers encourages seniors to carefully choose the right plan for their

specific needs and keep the following tips in mind:

- \*Never give personal information to anyone you do not know.
- \*Get all the facts before purchasing a discount card.
- \*Check with the Medicare program to verify the company is legitimate to sell discount cards.
- \*Ask if the card covers the drugs you need and if the benefits will change.
- \*Calculate and compare the amount you will save on each drug.
- \*Always check with your pharmacy to make sure the card is accepted.

Some alternative health plan cards offer legitimate discounts to all and will help people save money. However, these cards do not have any affiliation to the Medicare program. These plans may be legal and beneficial to some. The State, however, is concerned that companies will not make it clear to seniors that their card does not offer the same benefits as the Medicare cards.

Remember, the discount card will offer a temporary benefit to the elderly and disabled until the full benefits become effective in January 2006. Anyone who has questions about any card or program may contact Medicare representatives at 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227). You can also contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at (615) 741-4737 or 1-800-342-8385 or at [www.state.tn.us/consumer](http://www.state.tn.us/consumer) if you suspect a fraudulent or deceptive offer to enroll in an unapproved plan.